



Experience the Awe of His Presence

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The Fear of the Lord Brings Transformation

I am looking for the Body of Christ to experience the awe of God's presence. This happened for the Israelites at Mount Sinai. After the children of Israel left Egypt, they met with God at Mount Sinai and encountered the trumpet blast of a shofar. The way the Scripture portrays it, God Himself blew the trumpet as He descended and touched down on the mountain.

All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance. Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die." Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin."

EXODUS 20:18-20

It was a terrifying sight to see lightning flashes, smoke, and the mountain trembling. They saw something that was almost beyond their physical ability to tolerate, and they were in awe of what God was doing. God was trying to impart Himself to the people in a way that would eliminate their falling back into sin. You may say, "Well, fear to me is not a good thing." But Proverbs 9:10 says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." The fear of God is a positive thing that transforms you. Moses encouraged the people, "Don't just be afraid and back off. Come in a fear that transforms you into something else, so you will not sin against the Lord anymore." He was looking for a transformative experience that the children of Israel could have if they did not withdraw from

God's presence. But we know that the people did withdraw. They told Moses, "No, we don't want to go into this terrifying presence of God. We want you to do it." This was a turning point in history.



Do Not Refuse Him

The people of God had an opportunity to enter into something, but there was an inability or a refusal on their part to do it. "So the people stood at a distance, while Moses approached the thick cloud where God was" (Exodus 20:21). This attitude caused a lot of different things to unfold. Moses went into the presence of the Lord. God spoke to him and gave him the two tablets of the testimony (Exodus 31:18). Then within forty days the people were building an idol and falling back into sin (Exodus 32:8). Look at this dichotomy. The Scripture presents it so clearly because Moses was absorbed in the presence of God, while the people were building a golden calf, worshipping it, and falling into sin. So the very thing that God was trying to prevent happened.

The LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people. Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation." Then Moses entreated the LORD his God, and said, "O LORD, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?"

EXODUS 32:9-11

God tried to say that they were Moses's people. But Moses came back declaring, "No! These are Your people. You brought them up out of Egypt. Let's keep this straight here." So this is again a powerful look at the heart of Moses. Anyone with a little bit of arrogance or pride would have said, "Hey, that's a great idea. Why don't you wipe out all these people and make a great nation out of me. I could see where that would really work." But Moses refused that idea and started to almost argue with God over this point. Moses continued:

"Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, 'With evil intent He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about doing harm to Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'"

EXODUS 32:12-13

Moses did something wonderful that caused God to change His mind. And the way Moses acted in this situation is what God is looking for us to have as our response.



It Will Be an Awesome Experience

At some point Tabernacles will be an experience of God's appearing. God said it will happen. And when it does, it will be just as frightening as it was back then. There is no getting around the fact that if you enter the presence of God, it will be an awesome event. It

will be intimidating and scary. It will be destructive, in a sense, to your flesh. That is how transformation works. While beholding Him we are transformed from glory to glory into His image (2 Corinthians 3:18). That means you are dying to your flesh. That is what God said to Moses, “You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!” (Exodus 33:20). This transformation is awesome and is destructive to the sinful life we now live in our mortal flesh. But there is no other way to be transformed into God’s image than at some point to go through this process. If Moses did it, it can be done again. “God is not one to show partiality” (Acts 10:34). So it is important to look at the positive part of transformation and say, “I’m being transformed into His image.” That is why Moses told the people, “Don’t be afraid to enter God’s presence. He’s coming to transform you and get you out of your sin nature.”

When you read in the book of Revelation about the two witnesses, you realize that one of the witnesses represents a people who will again move in the ministry of Moses (Revelation 11:3–6). So the duplication of who Moses was and what he did is going to happen. Moses interceded, saying, “Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They are Your servants, and You swore to them by Yourself, by Your name.” The book of Hebrews in the New Testament repeats this same idea. God declared that being unable to swear by anyone greater, He swore by Himself (Hebrews 6:13). It is a unilateral covenant. That means it is not dependent on man; it is only dependent on God. The only way I know to abate the fear of standing in the awesomeness of God’s presence is to say, “Wait. You swore by Yourself. I’m not here because of my worthiness or my ability. I can come boldly like Moses and stand in Your presence.” Scripture even tells us to come boldly before the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16, KJV). But do not come boldly in yourself. Instead, come boldly with this confidence that when you stand in that awesome presence of God, you are not going to perish (John 3:16). God initiated this promise, and He did it because of His love and His determination that He is going to create a people who will walk with Him and live in His presence.





We Must Enter the Presence of the Father

We stand in God's presence by virtue of the blood of Yeshua (Jesus) that covers us and gives us access into the presence of the Father. We know that we have salvation and eternal life, but we also know that the capacity to sin is still resident within us. And I contend that the sin nature is still there because we never really dealt with it. Some will say, "But Christ came and gave Himself as a sacrifice for sin, and God accepted that sacrifice." That is true. But believers are still dying because of sin. Paul explained, "If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness" (Romans 8:10). The blood of Christ and what He did in His sacrifice allows us to come into the presence of the Father because "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19). On the cross Yeshua said, "It is finished," meaning that the sacrifice was finished (John 19:30). Christ finished what needed to be done for us to reconnect with the Father and have access to His presence. His part was finished. But it still rests on us to enter into the presence of the Father. Then we will have this transformational experience that the blood of Yeshua opened the door for but did not complete. I know it is not completed in me because I still sin. I believe in the Father, and I believe in Yeshua. I believe Yeshua's blood cleansed me and that my sins are forgiven. But the nature of sin still resides within my being, so there is something in me that yet needs to be transformed.

The Body of Christ must be prepared to enter the presence of the Father and intercede like Moses. We must have that same cry and say, "It is time for You to move and do something about this sin nature!" Moses had a drive to enter into God's presence and contend with Him.

As a result, God changed His mind and determined, “Okay, I’ll do something about it.” When Moses interceded, he was just as afraid as everyone else (Hebrews 12:21). He understood God’s fury and told the people, “God is trying to make you fear Him, so you do not sin.” Sometimes I wonder how much it would change our behavior if we really understood the anger of God. But I do not want something to outwardly change my behavior. I want something that changes it inwardly. That is why it takes a transformation by the grace of God to bring about a nature change for us. I do not want to serve Him in fear of who He is, but maybe that is a good place to start. When you read about what happened to the Israelites due to God’s anger, it is appalling. It is unfortunate that we have a false sense of security in Christianity that thinks, “Oh, everything is wonderful because of Jesus.” No, Yeshua is a provision, just as Mount Sinai was a provision. God came down and they could have entered His presence. It was a provision.



Enter His Court Equipped with the Word of God

Moses understood enough about God and the fact that the promises and covenants were unilateral that he literally made God change His mind. It was not just a good argument; it was a legal argument. When you enter the heavens, you are entering the court of God. God is a judge, and He is going to judge. The end-time is all about the Judge judging, so when you enter His court, you better know the Word of God. You better know your right to stand there, and you better understand the legality of the argument you are making. That is what Moses did, and God Himself had to bow to the argument and say, “You’re right. It’s My covenant. I made it and swore by My name. It doesn’t matter what these people do. It was never dependent on their

actions. It was only dependent on Me, My name, and who I am.” That is the covenant, so God had to deal with it. Moses put himself on the line, and God changed His mind.

But the argument did not stop there (Exodus 32:31–35, 33:1–3). God was still negotiating and said, “You’re right, Moses. I’ve got to give you the land. I’ll send an angel before you who will lead you. You’ll dwell in the land and destroy all the enemies. But I will not be there.” So Moses responded, “Wait a minute! That wasn’t the bargain either. The bargain was that You’d be there with us.” So God finally relented again, and said, “All right, you win. I’ll go. But tell these people they are obstinate and if I just look their way, I’m going to destroy them.” That is what God said: “Should I go up in your midst for one moment, I would destroy you” (Exodus 33:5).

I do not want to get to the point where God’s anger burns against us and judgment begins to flow. Lord, do not let that happen. There must be a people who enter God’s presence with the intercessory cry that Moses had. And it starts with you. By interceding for humanity, you are saving yourself because “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). No one is better than anyone else. So with this drive of intercession, we must go into His presence and cry for God to really change His stance. That is what Moses declared, “Relent of Your anger! Stop being mad and start being God. We both know they’re an obstinate and rebellious people who are going to sin. If it doesn’t happen today, it will happen tomorrow. So let’s go back to the fact that You made a covenant, and You swore that covenant in Your name.” Like Moses, when we come to this moment and experience the awesome fear of God, we cannot back off.



God Will Get All the Credit!

We are looking to be transformed into God’s image and be His people. He has already promised, “I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be My

people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart” (Jeremiah 24:7). By the time we get into our perfection, we will be absolutely convinced that we had no ability in ourselves to make any of this happen. Even with Christ as our sacrifice, we still cannot make this total transformation work the way it needs to work. We still need to see God come through for us. We cannot even say, “Oh yes, I appropriated the death of Christ on the cross. I appropriated salvation because I was so dedicated, and I pressed into God. I waited on God, and I prayed.” Arrogance is so rampant in human nature. Just give it an inch and it will take credit for everything. But we are going to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that it was all God and only God. In fact, He said, “My glory I will not give to another” (Isaiah 48:11). No one will ever get any of the credit except Him. We will recognize that He had to do everything.

God came down on Mount Sinai, but we are literally being moved into heaven to the throne of God (Hebrews 12:22–29). It will be just as scary with the seraphim, teraphim, and all the angelic hosts. Imagine standing in the presence of “the spirits of the righteous made perfect” (Hebrews 12:23). That has to be intimidating! It is like Zechariah’s vision of wearing filthy garments while he was standing in front of the Father with all the cloud of witnesses surrounding him (Zechariah 3:1–3). Somehow, Moses got to the place where he did not care about how frightened he was or what he looked like in comparison to God. In the midst of all the fear and turmoil about judgment, Moses responded, “Show me Your glory!” (Exodus 33:18). The Lord spoke to him “face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend” (Exodus 33:11). Yet Moses’s response was, “Give me more.” He understood that the only way to get out of this adamic nature is the transformational change that converts us into His likeness. As the book of Hebrews explains, we are not going to have a Sinai experience; we are literally going to be transported into the presence of the Father.



God Is Warning Us and Preparing Us

God’s anger is a consuming fire. Yet somehow, we are going to turn that anger away and say, “You swore by Your name. You cannot burn me up and You cannot burn up this people

because of our sin natures. Instead, transform us right now into Your image.” This transformation will be our experience. Before Christ went to the cross and ascended, He said, “Father, let them be where I am, that they might behold the glory that I had with You before the foundation of the world” (see John 17:24). Talk about something scary to behold! Imagine standing in front of this glorious Being while still in your fleshly sin nature. That is why the Israelites chose to back out and said, “We can’t handle that!” But do not refuse Him (Hebrews 12:25). It is that simple. No matter how scary it is, move into it. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). Stand with Paul the apostle and say, “I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh” (Romans 7:18). Do not try to polish it up. God already knows about it. The only mistake you can make is to refuse Him who is speaking. He will continue to shake all things until only those things that cannot be shaken remain (Hebrews 12:27). We are going to stand by faith and not run like scared dogs. God is warning us and preparing us. He is telling us what is going to happen. He is showing us the future fulfillment of the Day of Atonement.

Lord, as much as we can, we prepare our hearts. Give us the ability to not refuse You. Let us enter Your presence by the blood of Yeshua with faith that we will be transformed into Your image. As our Father, You promised it and predestined us to be conformed to the image of Your Son (Romans 8:29). In Your mind it is already done if we just do not refuse it. Lord, we open our hearts. Give us the faith and the love to stand in Your presence.

ABOUT GARY HARGRAVE



GARY HARGRAVE has a passion for leading people into spiritual maturity. Gary effectively ministers the life-changing truth of God's Word through Bible teaching and prophetic revelation that emphasizes the Lordship of Christ.

Gary embraces the teachings and insights of the Hebrew Scriptures as the essential foundation of God's Kingdom and the roots of Christian faith.

By cultivating spiritual maturity in Christians, Gary is deeply committed to teaching and inspiring unity in the Body of Christ and between Christians and the Jewish people.

Throughout decades of ministry, Gary has worked closely with leaders in the Jewish, Catholic and Protestant communities to build relationships based on commonality and understanding. He frequently leads study tours to Israel and the lands of the Bible.

Gary is the host of a weekly podcast entitled *Growing In God*, and is the founder of Shiloh University, an accredited online Bible college and seminary.

Gary and his family reside in Hawaii.

For other insightful resources by Gary Hargrave, including podcasts, books, articles, videos, and other educational materials, please visit: www.HargraveMinistries.org.

ABOUT HARGRAVE MINISTRIES

The calling of the Lord upon this ministry is to lead people into spiritual maturity by revealing biblical truth. **Our passion is to see the Kingdom of God manifest on earth** as the Body of Christ grows in unity, power and love.

Everything we do flows from the revelation of the Jewish roots of our Christian faith. It is our desire and privilege to bless the land and people of Israel. Our Israel outreach includes our ability to:

- **Feed the poor and break the cycle of poverty in Israel**
- **Support the orphans and widows of fallen Israeli soldiers**
- Provide physical and emotional care to **child victims of terrorism**
- **Build bridges between Christians and Jews with biblical study and research**
- Support archaeology and preservation of the **biblical City of David**
- Provide 24/7 **care for Holocaust survivors**
- **Help persecuted Jews around the world return to Israel and start new lives**
- Plant trees to **reforest Israel** and help create **"The Gospel Trail"** between Nazareth and Capernaum

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